Coast Guard Missions



A clean-up response crewman wades through a marshy area where oil collected. The spill was a result of a pipeline leak.

Maritime Law Enforcement

Enforces all federal laws on, under and on the high seas and waters under U.S. jurisdiction. Interdicts drug smugglers and illegal migrants. Enforces fisheries regulations and the Exclusive Economic Zone out to 200 miles at sea, the U.S. continental shelf and any other U.S. territory or possession.

Marine Inspection

Minimizes deaths, injuries, property loss and environmental damage by developing and enforcing standards and policies for the safe design, construction, maintenance and operation of commercial vessels and offshore facilities; issues Certificates of Documentation for U.S.-flagged vessels engaging in the coastwise, Great Lakes, fishing and registry trades; and endorses documents for recreational vessels. Conducts a fishing vessel safety program that includes courtesy marine inspections.

Marine Licensing

Issues new, renewed and upgraded licenses for officers and seamen. Regulates the manning of commercial vessels, to ensure all vessels are adequately manned with a minimum number of qualified crewmen to safely operate the vessel.

Marine Science

Provides weather and oceanographic services for other Coast Guard programs and federal services. Operates the International Ice Patrol, which charts iceberg movement into shipping lanes.

Port Safety & Security

Safeguards ports, waterways, waterfront facilities, vessels, and people working in them, from accidental or intentional damage, disruption, or injury. Manages port safety, port security and environmental protection concerns.